Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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Overview

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is meant to be a supplement to the Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) Ordering Guide. This document will be periodically updated and published on www.gsa.gov/iaas based on additional FAQs that are received. These questions come from government organizations that have had questions about the BPA.

Points of Contact

Skip Jentsch – Service Line Manager, IaaS
skip.jentsch@gsa.gov

Michael W. Hargrove – Contracting Officer, IaaS
michael.hargrove@gsa.gov

IaaS BPA Webpage: www.gsa.gov/iaas

FAQ

IaaS Services

1   *Q: What the does the offering look like and what are the service options?*
   A: There are three Lot offerings: Lot 1 – Cloud Storage, Lot 2 – Cloud Virtual Machines and Lot 3 – Cloud Web Hosting.

2   *What are the general benefits of using the IaaS BPA vs. an open market procurement?*
   A: The pre-competed aspect of the IaaS BPA means that your Agency's fair and open competition requirements are satisfied by using this vehicle (FAR 6.102(d)(3)). The IaaS BPAs offer pre-competed pricing and potential for additional competitive discounts at the Task Order level. These represent further discounts from Schedule 70 and IaaS BPA pricing and are the primary benefits of using a pre-competed BPA instead of an open market procurement.

   The IaaS BPAs offer cloud solutions that have already been vetted by GSA. All IaaS Terms and Conditions, SLAs, etc. are identical across all the BPA offerings and agreed to by all BPA holders. The task order competition timeframe is, therefore, significantly less than conducting a full and open competition.

Other benefits include:
a) Reduced acquisition costs through pre-competed solutions and pre-defined requirements
b) Shortened acquisition lifecycle – full and open competition can take 8-14 months; placing a FAR 8.405-3(c)(2) Order against an IaaS BPA for IaaS units of service can take just weeks.

Pre-Acquisition Assistance

3 *Q: What documents and other forms of assistance are available to help me learn more about the IaaS BPA Offering, help me with acquisition and estimate the cost and level of effort for implementing a cloud Infrastructure solution?*
A: The IaaS Service Line Manager will support customers throughout the ordering process. Documents and templates are available for the GSA IaaS BPA including an ordering guide with step-by-step instructions for orders using the BPA, a SOO template and other useful templates that are available on the IaaS BPA webpage. Assisted Acquisition Services (AAS) are also available for more customized, acquisition, project management, and financial management services for large and/or complex Information Technology and Professional Services solutions. If you do not see the documents that you want, please contact the Points of Contact listed at the beginning of this document.

The Cloud PMO also offers a free scope review of any and all of your draft solicitation documents.

Ordering and Pricing

4 *Q: What is the overall ordering process?*
A: Succinctly: An Agency defines its requirement; prepares its acquisition plan; issues its solicitation; evaluates all responses received; and awards a Task Order against an IaaS BPA. Please refer to the IaaS BPA Ordering guide for more in depth information.

5 *Q: What is the expected turnaround time from the time the procurement request is released to award?*
A: The time frame depends on varied factors, but primarily depends on the speed with which the ordering agency can complete their share of the acquisition process. A rule of thumb could be 60-90 days, but may be shorter if vendor responses can be evaluated and an award made more quickly by the ordering agency. Below are factors that influence the timeline to award:
a   Complexity of government requirements
b   Time period given for vendor responses (e.g. 2 weeks to 30 days)
c   Timeline for government ordering activity to evaluate vendor responses

d   Complexity of evaluation factors

6   *Q: What kind of fee is there to use the IaaS BPAs?*
     A: Government organizations ordering using the BPA <u>do not</u> owe a fee to GSA
     for using the BPA. All fees, including the Schedule 70 Industrial Funding Fee
     (IFF), have already been built into the IaaS BPA prices, and the BPA holder is
     responsible for making any fee payments to GSA.

7   *Q: What kinds of discounts can I expect to see?*
     A: The IaaS BPAs were built on existing Schedule 70 offerings - which are
     priced with discounts from commercial offerings. The pre-competed prices
     available on the IaaS BPAs are even further discounted from the Schedule 70
     prices. At the task order level, government organizations can (and are
     encouraged to) negotiate additional pricing discounts with IaaS BPA holders.
     Agencies might insert this language into their RFQ, "The Government is
     requesting discounts to the rates currently on the contractor's GSA IaaS BPA."

8   *What is the pricing structure and billing method for the BPA?*
     A: The Quoter provides pricing tiers for units of compute (fixed-price units of
     service), storage and data transfer bandwidth. The customer will be billed only
     for actual service units per month. Storage units are measured in Gigabytes
     (GB).

     Virtual Machines are purchased in units of service by attributes:
             RAM and Disk Space by per hour usage
             Data Transfer Bandwidth by GB of data transfer (in and out) monthly.
             Virtual Machine Block Storage by units of GB of storage used per month
             Input/output requests against storage are priced in 1 million increments
             Additional usage (overage) of Disk Space within a month shall be charged
                  by GB of disk space usage per hour.

     Cloud Web Hosting is priced by GB of disk space per month, and GB of
     bandwidth per month (in/out.)

     A complete detailed list of the IaaS BPA CLINs is available within the IaaS BPA
     Ordering Guide at www.gsa.gov/iaas.

9   *Q: How would we structure an award that would allow a federated environment
     with multiple organizations to engage different lots according to different time
     frame?*
     A: This can be done at the Task Order level by establishing different timeframes
     for different components in the Task Order documentation (for example, a
     Statement of Objectives (SOO). Identifying these timeframes up front provides

the IaaS BPA holders information about the scope and length of the tasks to be completed, and will allow you to compete all of the task scheduling up front, without having to issue multiple Task Orders. Assistance is available from the IaaS Service Line Manager and Cloud Program Management Office (PMO) to help you outline your SOO.

Requirements - General

10 *Q: How would we customize our requirements outside of those listed in the BPA?*
A: You can provide additional details and scope in a SOO/SOW when soliciting vendors at the Task Order level. If you are indicating how you are configuring the solution, this can be done within the scope of the BPA. If you are asking for services/technical requirements outside of scope, this cannot be done under the IaaS BPA and may require an additional Task Order on a different acquisition vehicle (such as IT Schedule 70 or GSA GWACs).

Competition

11 *Q: Are there any cases in groups where there is not competition for the offerings?*
A: The IaaS BPAs offer three Lots (Cloud Storage, Cloud Virtual Machines, and Cloud Web Hosting) with competitive offerings through nearly a dozen BPA holders. The use of the IaaS BPA vehicle should satisfy your agency's fair and open competition requirement (FAR 6.102(d)(3)).

12 *Q: Is there a requirement to specify which brand name solution you would prefer?*
A: No, there is no requirement to indicate a preferred brand name solution in the Task Order. All of the offered solutions have been vetted for the five (5) essential cloud computing characteristics as well as the technical requirements in the BPA. Users are required to issue RFQs to all BPA holders within an awardee Lot group unless the user completes a Limiting Sources Justification and Approval (IAW FAR 8.405-6.).

13 Q: What happens after the expiration of the IaaS BPA on October 14, 2015? Or what if we want to move out of the cloud or move to another provider?
A: An IaaS BPA Order placed by October 14, 2015, may establish a Period of Performance up to 5 years from the date of the Award, as long as the vendor's underlying Schedule 70 Contract is still in force.

For transitioning back from the cloud or between cloud providers, there is a BPA requirement for vendors to transfer data back in-house from the cloud solution in the case of contract termination or any other agency need – "The Quoter shall

transfer data back in-house either on demand or in case of contract or order termination for any reason." (Data Management, IaaS BPA pg. 7.)

Technical Requirements

14 Q: What are the CSP network requirements?

A: IaaS BPA CSPs have agreed to network requirements which include connection via a Tier 1 Internet service provider, two different geographic locations within the Continental U.S. (CONUS) and a minimum Internet bandwidth of 1 GB.

Security

15 Q: Does my agency need a special cloud focused Authority to Operate (ATO)?

A: As of June 2014, OMB has mandated that all cloud implementations must meet FedRAMP requirements; accordingly, each agency must include FedRAMP as part of its own A&A and ATO process.

16 Q: Who is responsible for paying for the cloud security A&A documentation and activities?

A: All IaaS BPA holders pay to implement the security controls, document the security controls, assess and continuously monitor the security controls, and complete the FedRAMP package for offerings/solutions under their respective IaaS BPA.

17 Q: My agency has unique security requirements in addition to the baseline requirements in the BPA and in the FedRAMP baseline controls. Can I provide additional controls?

A: Yes, Agency-specific controls shall be specified at the SOO, SOW, or RFQ/solicitation level, prior to issuing a Task Order. You should specify only those exceptional controls in your SOO/W and then include all requirements of the IaaS BPA by a simple reference to the BPA. That way your RFQ and SOO/W should only contain the exceptions and the BPA requirements would still be in force.